

Life is Good....Don't Get Hurt

Community Safety Conference

By Debra Moon

Special to the *Tutuveni*

If you get stopped on the highway for a seat belt check, it's just Danny Joseph doing his job. He is the new Injury Prevention Coordinator at First Mesa Consolidated Villages (FMCV). This position is newly created through a 5-year grant received by FMCV for Injury Prevention. Danny began the work forming a Hopi Injury Prevention Coalition and held a Conference at Hopi Junior Senior High School on June 6th and 7th.

The topics included in the Conference were assaults, falls, motor vehicle crashes, domestic violence, alternative sentencing, highway safety, suicides, fires, and other injuries such as poisoning or animal bites. Injuries are a leading cause of death on the Hopi Reservation. The Conference was an opportunity to learn about what kind of injuries are occurring in the community and what each person can do to prevent them.

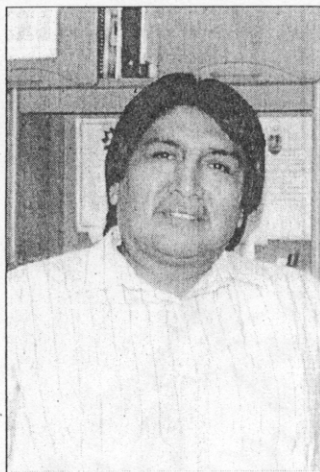
The "Life is Good..." Conference was well attended and supported. The Master of Ceremonies both days was Herman Honanie from the Hopi Tribal Office of Environmental Health. The first day 107 people attended and various presentations were made including a keynote speaker, Kelly Taylor from IHS Injury Prevention Program in Maryland.

Breakout Sessions on day one were: Fire/Burns, presented by the Hopi Firefighter Crew, Community Hazards, presented by Lucas Namoki and Erin Kraker from the Hopi Tribal Office of Environmental Health, Unintentional Injuries, presented by Kelly Taylor from IHS and Kenny Hicks from Office of Environmental Health in Snowflake, and Child and Elderly Abuse, presented by Joanne Perank at Social Services, Hopi Health Care Center. The Injury Prevention Program, Danny Joseph's office, provided lunch on this day.

Hopi EMS, the Hopi Police Department and the Fire Department also gave a presentation on the effects of trauma on Emergency Response Crews on June 6th. Joseph commented that he was glad someone else had the job of emergency response after seeing that presentation. He realized many things about the job he had not thought of before, even controlling onlookers to accident scenes, and what to do if they are your own relatives.

Day two also held a full agenda. The Conference was attended that day by 87 people. The emphasis on June 7th was on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Effects of substance abuse were examined both for the impact on the individual and also the family and the community. Keynote speaker that day was Jamie Kootswatwa, Criminal Investigator for Hopi Range Enforcement Services (Hopi Rangers).

Several presentations were made to the whole group before the breakout sessions on the second day. They included: The effects of Alcohol and Drugs on the Body, presented by a Team from the Hopi Health Care Center, Dietician, Jill Vanderkin., Dr. Doug Lehman, and Karen Honanie; Alcohol and Domestic Violence, presented by Victims Advocate from the



Danny Joseph

Domestic Violence Program, Maxine Wadsworth and Social Worker from the Hopi Health Care Center Joanne Perank; and Alternative Sentencing, presented by the Tribal Courts system and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Judge LaRance, Donna Humetewa, Program Director, Sarah Vasquez, Victim Assistance Coordinator, (MADD).

The Elderly Nutrition Program at FMCV provided the lunch on the second day. After lunch several sessions were available for the Conference attendees. These included: Motor Vehicle Crashes and Highway Safety, presented by the Hopi Rangers and the Fire Department, Falls (from bikes, the mesas, etc.) presented by Erin Kraker and Lucas Namoki from the Hopi Tribal Office of Environmental Health; Suicides, presented by Merv Yoyetewa, from Hopi Range Enforcement Services; Assaults and Domestic Violence, presented by Maxine Wadsworth, Victims Advocate from the Domestic Violence Program, and Joanne Perank, Social Worker from the Hopi Health Care Center; and DUI Impact, presented by Donna Humetewa, Director of Hopi Tribe Youth Programs through the Hopi Courts, and Sarah Vasquez, Arizona MADD Organization.

"It is great to see our own people with all this knowledge. When I see them sharing good information with each other, I just feel good. What we're doing is going to save lives," says Joseph.

The community agencies provided booths on both days. Phyllis Torivio set up a booth for the Guidance Center. Branyon Claw, Jim Benally, Willy Kewanhyoima and Bob Correll represented First Mesa Police Service. Randal Mahle the School Resource Officer from the Hopi Police Department set up a booth. Risk Management had a booth manned by Harriet Honghova. Donna Humetewa, represented Mothers Against Drunk Driving from Flagstaff.

The Hopi Fire Department set up a display of their firetruck and equipment for all to see on day two of the Conference. One of the fire crew member mentioned that a couple of years back the Fire Department had launched a campaign to clean people's chimneys for them before winter came. "That year we were almost out of business.

Nobody called us," the crewmember recalled.

Danny wants to get input from the community for safety needs. He set up an evaluation system, which included getting written feedback from the Conference participants. The Facilitators of each breakout session also wrote down notes from their sessions, including comments and suggestions from participants. Danny Joseph and Lucas Namoki will review these notes in their next planning session for the program work.

Joseph liked the idea of the chimney inspection, among other ideas generated at the Conference. He is looking into doing something similar in his position as Injury Prevention Coordinator. Some of the plans he has for certain include a Bike Rodeo in August, probably around the 8th, although the date has not been set. Joseph is trying to obtain some bike helmets for the participants at this time. He is also looking into smoke detector use. He has discovered a type of smoke detector that is less sensitive. This eliminates the problem of the detector going off during frying of foods for meals. "What happens then, is that a family member will remove the battery to quiet things down, and then never put the battery back in. Then when the smoke detector is needed to save a home or lives, it is not functional. I would like to help install these new smoke detectors in the homes, if we can make that part of our program."

Joseph has been researching auto safety. So far he has discovered that almost half of the vehicle crashes occurring between October 1996 and September 1998 occur in the First Mesa area. Danny Joseph reviewed 78 police records and 32 were in First Mesa. Of these 32 accidents, were 5 juvenile drivers, 4 of the 32 accidents involved fatalities. Seven of the crashes involved alcohol and ten of the police records did not contain any information about alcohol one way or the other. In twelve of the crashes speed was a contributing factor. Many of the police reports did not even contain information on seat belt usage. Danny Joseph is going to be meet and educate the police on the importance of including seat belt usage in reports.

Danny recalls the demonstration of the car crash dummies at the Conference. "When they weren't wearing their safety belts they just came flying out when the car turned over. But when they had their belts on you could see their heads moving around, but they stayed put-nobody came flying out."

A big push for the grant is safety belt use. Danny Joseph has begun a series of checkpoints for safety belt usage. He is keeping a record of what he finds. So far, he notes that men use their safety belts more often than women do, people in general tend to wear safety belts more often on the way to work than on the way home. He also finds that many children are belted improperly. He is a Child Passenger Technician, and volunteers to demonstrate the proper way to seat belt a child at any of the Community Centers that would like to arrange a time for him to come. He may be contacted at First Mesa Consolidated Villages, 737-2670.